

HOME  
FOR THE  
HOMELESS



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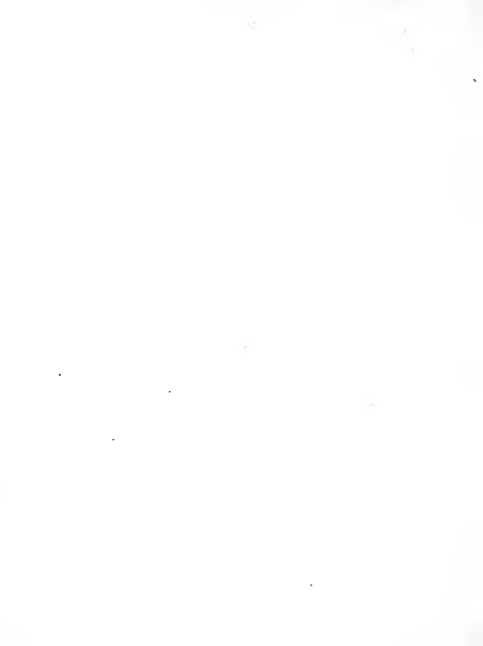
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HOME  
FOR  
THE HOMELESS.

BY MRS. M. E. MILLER.



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# HOME FOR THE HOMELESS.

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## CHAPTER I.

### PLAYING SCHOOL.

THE happiest little girl I know is Lizzie Greene. She has a loving father and mother, a brother Frank, and a baby

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sister, in her pretty home, and half a dozen dolls.

To be sure, she ought to be happy with all these blessings; but some little girls who have as many are not.

Lizzie is happy in having a mild temper—a heart that is loving and unselfish. Everybody, old and young, loves her. One stern old man, who does not love children, (I am sorry for him,) says he can't

help loving Lizzie, she is so lovable.

If baby worries, she stops when Lizzie comes home from school.

If mamma is tired, she may rest then, for baby loves Lizzie almost as well.

Papa does not feel quite at home till her soft arms have wound about his neck, and he takes his slippers from her hand.

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Frank has never found a boy he likes to play with so well, she is so merry.

She will do anything to please a playmate; but she likes best, I think, to play school. At home, she is 'most always the teacher of Frank and the dolls.

You would laugh to see how prim she is then. The dolls mind her well; at least they sit very still, and neither whisper nor talk aloud. One of them

is sure to get the medal for being the best girl in school.

Frank has learned to read in this home school with this gentle teacher. He will stand up and spell his lesson for Lizzie as well as any boy five years old.

Sometimes, when he gets tired, Lizzie will play she is an A-B—ab scholar, and he is a great, large man for a teacher.

One day she played she was

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a bad child, and would not say her letters. This Frank did not like. He forgot how large a man he was, and threw the book at her, as if he were a spunky little boy.









## CHAPTER II.

### COLD FINGERS.

ONE cold winter morning, Lizzie sat down by the hall stove, to take a last look at a hard lesson, before she put on her warm cloak, hood, and furs, to go to school. Her high rubber-boots stood near the stove to warm.

It had snowed all night, and

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Lizzie had thought when she got up, "How can I ever get to school through this deep snow?"

Then she thought of her new rubber-boots, and said to Frank, "It will be fun to run through the snow with my high boots. Hurry, Frank, and get big enough to go to school with me."

Now Frank stood at the window in the hall to see a man clear the snow from the stoop and walk.

“Hi!” he said, laughing, “I see two butcher-boys snow-balling each other. Ha! ha! how cold their fingers must be!”

“Do be still, Frank. ‘*Albany is the capital of New York—Albany is the capital of New York.*’”

“Hi! here’s more cold fingers! An awful-so-poor beggar-woman and a little bit of a girl going down Tommy Wells’ basement steps. Guess you

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would n't like to get your breakfast that way, Lizzie."

"O Frank, be still. '*Boston is the capital of Massachusetts.*'"

"I say, Liz, that girl looks half froze. They've gone down Jimmy Atkins' now!"

"Well, well, I'm glad 'tisn't you nor me. '*Co-lum-bus is the capital of Ohio.*'"

"See here now, they're crossing over here, true as you live,

Liz!" and he bounded to the door.

As he opened it, the wind blew in a flurry of snow that made Lizzie shiver.

"Why, Frank, what are you doing?" she said, as she got up to see. He stood outside, and called,

"Come right up here. Lizzie and I are here, and you will get warm as toast by our good fire."

“Why, Frank! Hannah would ask them in at the lower door, and give them something there.”

“Guess they can’t warm their feet very fast by the range; I can’t.”

By that time the poor woman and child had come up the steps, and stood within the door.

Frank forgot how cold it was, and ran up stairs to tell



his mother. She was shut up in her room, giving the baby a warm bath.

“Give them some coffee,” she said, “and some scraps to eat, and I will not go down just now.”

As Frank went down the stairs, he saw that Lizzie had been quicker than he to help them. She was bringing a mug of warm coffee and a fresh roll.

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“Sit there by the stove to warm, and drink this, little girl; you shake with cold.”

“Her name is Phebe, miss. It’s bitter cold, and we’re like to be turned out for rent before night.”

Frank had shut the door, and got some pieces of bread and meat to put in the woman’s basket. When they were warm and went away, he told them to come again.





As Lizzie walked to school in her new boots, she sighed to think how cold poor Phebe's feet must be in socks. She thought she would ask her mother if she might give her own old shoes to the little girl when she came the next day.



## CHAPTER III.

### DISAPPOINTED.

FRANK and Lizzie watched the next morning, and many days after, for that half-frozen child; but she did not come again.

Frank thought she had been run over on the street and killed, or hurt, and taken to the hospital, where she lay sick and in

pain. "I'd give my sled back to Santa Claus if he'd tell me where she is."

Lizzie hoped some rich lady had taken Phebe to be her own daughter.

Even their father and mother wondered about it, when they heard the children fret because she came no more.

One night, at tea, Mr. Greene said, "On my way home I saw a little girl as poor in clothes

and flesh as she could be. She was blue with cold. She had no hood, no shawl, no shoes. Her very arms were bare. I gave her money to take home, and some to buy hot coffee at a stand kept by an old man near. I left her eating there."

"Could it be our own little girl, papa?" asked the children.

"Hardly, so far from here. She could not beg about here and live so far away.







“Her poor mother may have moved since they were here,” said Mrs. Greene.

“I shall watch for her on the street. Something beside her fine eyes pleased me. I cannot forget her face.”

“Then it must be our little Phebe,” said Frank. Alone by himself, he had asked God to tell him where Phebe had gone; now he felt sure he should find her soon.

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All round the stands and corners near the ferry Mr. Greene looked for that forlorn child. At last he spoke to the man who had sold her the warm drink. He had not seen her since that night. He knew she had lived a while in a cellar near, with a bad woman she called mother. He would find out if they lived there still.

## CHAPTER IV.

### AT LAST.

THE next night, Grimes had news for Mr. Greene. He had found the poor child sick in the cellar, alone. Going half-clad in the bitter cold had made her ill; and then the woman beat her because she could beg no more. At last the cruel woman was missing. Some said she

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was dead. Some said she had been shut up in jail.

Lizzie and Frank came down town with their father the next morning. The kind Mr. Grimes was glad to show them where the child lay sick.

"This is my little friend," said Mr. Greene to his children, as they stood shyly in the cellar-door, while he bent over the bed to see if it were the one he sought.

“And ours too, papa,” said Lizzie, when she came near.

The girl had grown so thin that Frank did not know if it was Phebe, till she turned her big dark eyes to look at him.

It was not easy for her to smile; but when Lizzie asked if she remembered going into their hall, one cold day, to warm by a big stove, Phebe *did* smile.

“I never was in such a warm house before,” she said.

"We thought you had forgot us," said Frank; "but we watched for you every day."

"No, I could n't forget," said Phebe; "your house was so warm and clean. There was snow that morning, and you both had on stockings and shoes, I 'member."

"There may be something in your basket she can eat, Lizzie," Mr. Greene said, seeing the basket was forgotten.







Fred first took out a roll. Phebe sat up in bed to take it.

“This is like that you gave me before. Is there one more for my dinner?”

She stared at the basket very greedily, you might have thought; but it was a rare thing for her to know, when she ate one scanty meal, where the next would come from; and a good breakfast and dinner in

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one day only came to her in dreams.

“Yes, yes,” said Fred, “here are more rolls, and eggs and tongue and jelly, and a bottle of coffee. Lots of sugar and milk in that, for I saw mamma fix it. And here’s a tin cup and a tin picnic spoon.”

Mr. Greene helped Phebe to sit up, with her back at the hard head-board of the bedstead. She had no pillow,

and but a poor straw-bed to lie on.

She could eat but little. It made the children feel badly to see her shake her head and sigh, when they put to her lips bits of the good things their mother sent.

In another room Mr. Greene found a woman tending a sick babe. To please him, she brought it into Phebe's room, and said she would sit there till

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he came back. When he took Frank and Lizzie away, Phebe cried. Their smiles and kind words had been worth more than the nice things they left for her to eat and drink.



## CHAPTER V.

### PHEBE FINDS A HOME.

IN the afternoon Mr. Greene came with his wife and their own doctor, who said they might take Phebe away; a ride would do her no harm. She could but die where she was; and with good care and food, in a warm, clean place, she might grow strong and well.

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This good father and mother stood by the window full of broken panes, looking down on a dirty alley, with filth and badness all around. The doctor said Phebe could get care and food in the hospital, that would cost them nothing. He would see to it that day.

“But if she lives to come out, what then?” asked Mr. Greene.

“Oh, she will come back to



this sort of life, unless we hear her mother is dead, and put her in an asylum.”

“Her bright eyes ought to look upon better sights than these,” Mr. Greene said.

“Take her home with us,” said his good wife.

A carriage was called. The doctor wrapped the lady's thick shawl about the sick child, and tenderly held her in his arms till he could lay her in the cosey

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little bed Mrs. Greene made ready in haste in a neat hall bedroom.

“‘As ye have done it to the least of one of these, ye have done it unto me,’” he said to the lady as she brought soft pillows for the poor little head to rest upon, and covered the child with blankets soft and warm.

Rest, warmth, and the little food she could take, helped





Phebe to live, with God's blessing—which for the first time she learned to ask.

Frank was a good boy, and a good friend to Phebe. Many times a day he went up and down the long stairs to wait upon her. She learned to love all in the house before she could leave her bed.

When she could run about the house, she was so happy, she wanted to do something

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for each one who had been kind to her. She could not read; and it is sadly true that she had been taught to do bad things. She did not know it was a sin to lie.



## CHAPTER VI.

### SUNSHINE.

WHEN the warm spring days came, Phebe was yet weak and thin.

Aunt Mary Wood came from the country to visit Mr. Greene and his dear ones. She had a tender heart, and was sorry for Phebe. She talked with her about her sad little life. Phebe

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said her own dear mother starved to death when her brother was a baby.

“Heart alive! You say she *starved*, right here in this rich city!”

“Yes; there wasn’t anything to eat that night but the crust she gave me.”

“Then what did the baby do?”

“The next day he died too,” Phebe cried.



“Where was your father?”

“He was up the river cutting ice. When he came back there was nobody but me.”

“What did the poor man do?”

“He cried awfully. We were so lonesome that he got another mother—her that took me here last winter; not a bit like my own mother. She got drunk and beat my father and me. He said he could not live, he was so sorry she had come.

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So one morning when I woke up he was dead too."

The poor girl cried as if her heart would break.

"Then how did you live, my poor child?"

"I had to beg for both of us; but I got little to eat. She sold the best, and all the clothes ladies gave me, to buy rum that made her cross and bad."

"Didn't she teach you to work—to wash dishes—"

“Why, we didn’t have any dishes,” Phebe said.

“Ate with your fingers like heathen, I dare say,” said aunt Mary, holding up both hands. “And she didn’t teach you to sew, or darn stockings, or pull weeds, or feed chickens, or any little girls’ work.”

Mrs. Greene said gently, “Aunt Mary, you can hardly guess how poor these people are in a large city. This child

was on a bed—some have not even that. There was no stove, no table, no chair, no dishes; no rag to mend but the one on her back, too thin to hold a stitch. She never saw a chicken out of market, and a *garden*—never.”

Something in aunt Mary's eyes shone like diamonds behind her glasses.

“Ellen Greene,” she said, “you have three children of





your own. You cannot care for this poor thing, without time and patience that belong to them. Give her to me."

"I will, aunty, if you feel that you can teach her, as a baby, all she must learn to make her a good child and a useful woman."

"Heart alive!" said aunt Mary, "I shall have nothing worse on my mind. It is ten years since I took Jane from

the workhouse. She is able now to do all my work. She may leave me some day, and I will teach Phebe to take her place, as I trained two girls before her. They have homes of their own now, and often come to see me—and to bless me, dear.” Aunt Mary’s voice trembled.

“Phebe, child, how would you like to live in the country with me; to play in an orchard,



on green grass, under old apple-trees; to feed chickens, and drink new milk till you grow strong, and learn to work?"

"Oh, I'd like it, ma'am," said Phebe, springing upon her feet. "May we go right away?"

In aunt Mary's home she is a busy, happy child. She sings the live-long day; and as she learns to do her best, for God above and aunt Mary here, the old life fades away from her.

One sign of it lingers in her play. She will take a basket and walk about, halting often, knocking as if the garden-fence were full of doors. She talks softly, then goes on, to stop and knock again at gate-post or tree.

Aunt Mary watches unseen. She thinks that as happier children live over their past joys—rides, sails, or visits—this poor child goes back to begging when she plays.





When Fred and Lizzie went to Mount Hope this summer, they hardly knew the neat little girl, with plump rosy cheeks, who met them at the gate.

“Why, Phebe, is this you?” asked Lizzie.

“Good!” said Fred. “How nice and fat you are! Why, your cheeks are as plump and red as apples!”

“Yes, I see something besides black eyes now, Phebe,”

said Mr. Greene kindly, putting a paper of fruit and nuts from the city in her hand.

“Country air!” said aunty.

“Aunty’s care!” said mother, tossing off baby’s cap and cape.

Three happy weeks made three other pairs of cheeks round and rosy, and made “Good-by” a hard word for Lizzie and Phebe to say to each other.













